

Chairman Tom Davis
Government Reform Committee Hearing,
“Cutting Out the Waste: An Overview of H.R. 5766, the Government Efficiency Act, and H.R.
3282, The Abolishment of Obsolete Agencies and Federal Sunset Act of 2005”
Opening Statement
July 19, 2006

Good morning and thank you for coming. The purpose of today’s hearing is to discuss two specific legislative proposals that have been introduced this Congress to improve the operations and effectiveness of programs and agencies in the federal government.

The first bill we will discuss today will be H.R. 5766, the Government Efficiency Act, which was introduced by Rep. Tiahrt earlier this month. The legislation would authorize the establishment of a bipartisan “Federal Review Commission” to study whether a specific aspect of federal government operations would function more efficiently and effectively if some or all of the relevant federal programs and agencies were reorganized, consolidated, abolished, expanded, or transferred. Legislative proposals drafted by the bipartisan commissions would then be considered in Congress pursuant to expedited procedures.

The second bill we will discuss today will be H.R. 3282, the Abolishment of Obsolete Agencies and Federal Sunset Act of 2005, which was introduced by Rep. Brady last year. The legislation would establish a bipartisan Federal Agency Sunset Commission to review and evaluate the efficiency and public need for every federal agency on a periodic basis and report its recommendations to Congress. The legislation would require a federal agency to be abolished within one year of the Commission’s review unless Congress either reauthorized the agency or extended the deadline for abolishment.

This will be the eighth hearing conducted in the Committee in recent years to discuss the need for a legislative tool that would authorize limited reorganizations of the executive branch intended to improve the operations and effectiveness of the federal government. Three hearings have been held to discuss the need to develop legislation to address overlap and duplication government-wide; four “case study” hearings have been held to assess the extent of overlap and duplication in specific areas of federal operations.

After spending the past three and a half years exploring various approaches to eliminating overlap and duplication in the federal government, we are here today to discuss the merits of two particular proposals aimed at addressing the issue and to pose questions to the bill sponsors about the specifics of their proposals. The purpose of today’s hearing is to give Members of this Committee an opportunity to ask their questions and raise their concerns before this Committee reconvenes tomorrow morning to conduct a business meeting to consider these two proposals.

I would now like to introduce our witnesses. Our first panel is composed of the two sponsors of the legislative proposals being considered today: Representatives Todd Tiahrt and Kevin Brady. Both Members have long championed the need to reduce waste, fraud and mismanagement in the federal government and I applaud their efforts in this regard. Our second panel of witnesses includes James Horney, Senior Fellow from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, and Charles Loveless, Legislative Director for the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees.

I welcome all of the witnesses to today’s hearing and I look forward to their testimony.